

HOUSE RESOLUTION 154
By Rhinehart

A RESOLUTION to limit the use of the House of Representative's voice mail system to certain hours.

WHEREAS, Article I, Section 1, of the Constitution of Tennessee provides: "That all power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their peace, safety, and happiness; for the advancement of those ends they have at all times, an unalienable and indefeasible right to alter, reform, or abolish the government in such manner as they may think proper"; and

WHEREAS, given this constitutional provision, access by the people to elected representatives is an inherent part of our democratic society and an inalienable right of the people; and

WHEREAS, legislators and their staff must be accessible to the people, whether in person, by telephone or other means, at all times, especially during the legislative session when the people's business is of utmost concern; and

WHEREAS, during this very important time, constituents should have direct and expedient means of reaching their respective representatives via telecommunications; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly's present telephone voice mail system impedes the public's ability to access their elected representatives and staff during the legislative session, allowing concerned citizens and the people of the state to only leave messages through an automated system with no guarantee that the message will be received; and

WHEREAS, an exception to this occurs after-hours and during non-session periods, when a voice mail messaging system is necessary, given the unavailability of legislators and staff during this time; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, That the legislative voice mail system, in the best interests of the citizens of the state, is not to be used during the regular legislative session and any subsequent special session, from Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. After 4:30 p.m. during session and anytime between legislative sessions, voice mail use is permitted.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.